Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1 - 5   (canceled)

6.   (currently amended)   A computer network comprising:

a receiver node; and

at least one sender node coupled with the receiver node over the network and being configured to generate a plurality of irregular time intervals as a function of a current level of ambient network traffic;

the at least one sender node being further configured to send reports to the receiver node at said plurality of irregular time intervals, wherein at least a portion of the reports include information regarding informing said receiver node of a schedule defining the time plurality of irregular time intervals at which the first at least one sender node will send subsequent reports to the receiver node.

7.   (original)   The computer network of claim 6, wherein the receiver node is configured to create an expectation window for receiving each report from the at least one sender node.

8.   (original)   The computer network of claim 7, wherein the expectation window opens at a preset time prior to the corresponding time interval.

9.   (original)   The network of claim 6, wherein the receiver node is configured to send a query to the at least one sender node if one of the reports is not received while its expectation window remains open.

10.   (original)   The network of claim 6, further comprising a second sender node configured to send reports to the receiver node at irregular intervals, wherein the reports include information regarding the time intervals at which the second sender node will send subsequent reports to the receiver node.

11.   (currently amended)   A method for exchanging data between a sender and a receiver over a communications link, the method comprising:

receiving from the sender data indicative of ~~an interval~~ a plurality of irregular time intervals at which ~~a~~ one or more reports are scheduled to be ~~report will be~~ sent, wherein said plurality of irregular time intervals are generated based on a function of a current level of ambient network traffic;

creating an expectation window for receiving at least one of said one or more reports ~~the report~~ from the sender during a time period which includes at least one of said plurality of irregular time intervals ~~the interval~~; and

opening the expectation window during the time period.

12.   (currently amended) The method of claim 11, further comprising receiving at least one of said one or more reports ~~the report~~ while the expectation window remains open.

13.   (original)   The method of claim 12, further comprising closing the expectation window without responding to the sender.

14.   (original)   The method of claim 11, further comprising creating another expectation window for receiving a subsequent report from the sender during a subsequent time period.

15.   (currently amended) The method of claim 14, wherein <u>at least one of said one or more reports</u> ~~the report~~ includes data indicative of a subsequent interval at which the subsequent report will be sent, wherein the subsequent interval is measured from the sending of <u>at least one of said one or more reports</u> ~~the report~~ to the sending of the subsequent report.

16.   (original)   The method of claim 11, further comprising generating a schedule at the receiver for receiving reports from the sender.

17.   (original)   The method of claim 16, further comprising monitoring the ambient usage of the communications link between the sender and the receiver.

18.   (original)   The method of claim 17 wherein said generating step includes selecting a seed number representing the average interval for exchanging data between the sender and the receiver as a function of the ambient usage of the communications link.

19.   (original)   The method of claim 11, further comprising generating an event if the report is not received while the expectation window remains open.

20.   (original)   The method of claim 19, wherein said generating step includes sending a status inquiry to the sender.

21.   (currently amended) A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing ~~the steps recited in claim 11.~~ a method for exchanging data between a sender and a receiver over a communications link, the method comprising:

receiving from the sender data indicative of a plurality of irregular time intervals at which one or more reports are scheduled to be sent, wherein said plurality of irregular time intervals are generated based on a function of a current level of ambient network traffic;

creating an expectation window for receiving at least one of said one or more reports from the sender during a time period which includes at least one of said plurality of irregular time intervals ; and

opening the expectation window during the time period.

Claims 22 – 36   (canceled)